

**SYSTEMS, METHODS AND COMPUTER PROGRAM
PRODUCTS FOR ONLINE ORDERING OF BUSINESS
DIRECTORY LISTINGS AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to computer systems, methods and computer program products and, more particularly, to electronic commerce conducted via computer networks.

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Background of the Invention

Business directories such as Yellow Pages have long been provided as printed publications and, more recently, as "online" (*i.e.*, accessible via the Internet or other computer network) directories (see, for example, realpages.com). Such
10 business directories provide consumers with readily accessible listings and pertinent contact information for businesses of interest. The business listings are often grouped or classified according to the relevant category or categories of products or services offered by the business. Within the groupings and classifications, the listings may be alphabetically or otherwise ordered.

15 Online directories as mentioned above typically include a listing for each listed business including "basic" information that may include a name, a telephone number, and an address. A listed business may desire to include additional information or features in its listing in order to better inform directory users and/or to stand out more prominently in the directory. The business directory publisher

may provide for enhancements to the basic listing or advertisement. While the basic listing may be provided for a charge or free of charge, business directory publishers typically charge additional fees for enhancements, or may not be contacted by large publishers at all because of their size.

Typically, a business directory publisher will solicit listing enhancements by directly contacting businesses (e.g., face to face or via telephone). Because of the costs associated with such sales efforts, sales representatives typically only call upon relatively large businesses of the type that may be expected to invest in and incur the additional expense associated with an enhanced listing. However, there are some smaller businesses that would also like to purchase enhanced listings but are not contacted by sales representatives. Thus, these smaller businesses may not be provided with ready opportunity to order such enhancements, or may not be contacted by large publishers at all because of their size.

15 **Summary of the Invention**

According to method embodiments of the present invention, a method for receiving an order for a listing of a business in a business directory includes providing a Web site accessible by a customer and receiving a request from the customer at the Web site to place the order for the listing of the business in the business directory.

According to embodiments of the present invention, a system for receiving an order for a listing of a business in a business directory includes a Web site accessible by a customer and means for receiving a request from the customer at the Web site to place the order for the listing of the business in the business directory.

According to further embodiments of the present invention, a computer program product for receiving an order for a listing of a business in a business directory includes a computer readable storage medium having computer readable program code embodied in the medium. The computer readable program code includes computer readable program code configured to provide a Web site accessible by a customer and computer readable program code configured to receive a request from the customer at the Web site to place the order for the listing of the business in the business directory.

Objects of the present invention will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art from a reading of the figures and the detailed description of the preferred embodiments which follow, such description being merely illustrative of the present invention.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention including a plurality of business listings in a business directory;

10 **Figure 2** is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention including additional information relating to an enhanced business listing of the Web page of **Figure 1**;

Figure 3 is a block diagram of a system suitable for use with embodiments of the present invention;

15 **Figure 4** is a block diagram of data processing systems according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a more detailed block diagram of data processing systems according to embodiments of the present invention;

20 **Figure 6A** is a flowchart illustrating operations according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 6B is a further flowchart illustrating operations according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

25 **Figure 8** is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 9 is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

30 **Figure 10A** is a screen capture of a portion of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 10B is a screen capture of a further portion of the Web page of **Figure 10A**;

Figure 10C is a screen capture of a further portion of the Web page of **Figures 10A and 10B**;

Figure 11 is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

5 **Figure 12** is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 13 is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention; and

10 **Figure 14** is a further screen capture of a Web page generated according to embodiments of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which embodiments of the invention
15 are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art.

20 As used herein, a "business directory" is a publication including listings for a plurality of businesses or commercial entities. Each listing may include, for example, the name, address and telephone number of the business. In a business directory, it is the business itself that is listed, not merely a product of the business. The listings may be alphabetically or otherwise organized in the business directory.

25 A "classified business directory" is a business directory wherein businesses are categorized or classified according to the relevant category or categories of products or services offered by the respective businesses. An "online business directory" is a business directory accessible via a computer network such as the Internet.

30 With reference to **Figure 1**, an exemplary Web page **100** displaying a portion of an online business directory is shown therein. The Web page **100** includes three business listings **102, 104, 106**. The listings **102, 104, 106** are listed under a heading **108** indicating a category within which each of the listings **102,**

104, 106 has been classified and grouped. The classification indicates goods or services offered by the businesses listed in the category.

The listings **104, 106** are "basic" listings including a business name **110**, a business address **112**, and a telephone number **114**. A link **116** is provided in each listing **104, 106** which, when "clicked" or selected by a directory user, will transfer the directory user to a Web page displaying a map graphically indicating the geographic location of the business address.

The listing **102** is an "enhanced listing" and may be further characterized as an advertisement. In addition to the business name **110**, the business address **112**, the business telephone number **114**, and the map link **116** of the associated business, the listing **102** includes enhanced text **120** within the body of the listing **102**. The listing **102** further includes a "Web site" link button **122** that will transfer the directory user to a Web site of the business (*e.g.*, the business' homepage) when pressed by the user. The listing **102** also includes an "e-mail" link button **124** that will generate an e-mail template preaddressed to a prescribed e-mail address of the business when the button **124** is pressed by the user. A "more info" link button **126** is provided to transfer the directory user to an "info plus" Web page **130** (as shown in **Figure 2**) including the enhanced listing **102** and additional information **132**. Furthermore, the enhanced listing **102** is readily visually distinguishable from the basic listings **104, 106** by highlighting **128**, which may include optical shading (for example, of a bright yellow color) or the like. The highlighting may extend throughout the listing **102** or be otherwise patterned.

According to some embodiments of the invention, the systems, methods and computer program products of the present invention may be used to receive orders for basic listings (*e.g.*, the listings **104, 106**) and/or enhanced listings (*e.g.*, the listing **102**). According to further embodiments, the systems, methods and computer program products are adapted to enhance existing basic listings in a business directory. For example, the business directory may be an online business directory and the data for the basic listings may be sourced from another directory (*e.g.*, a printed or hard copy business directory publication). According to some embodiments, the systems, methods and computer program products may be adapted to only receive orders for new enhanced listings or enhancements to existing listings. The following description describes systems, methods and

computer program products as employed for receiving an order for the enhanced listing 102. However, it will be appreciated by those of skill in the art that differently configured listings may be ordered using the systems, methods and computer program products according to the present invention, it being understood
5 that the Web pages as shown in **Figures 7-14** and the listing 102 (as well as the info plus Web page 130) are merely exemplary of listings and Web pages which may be ordered and generated in accordance with the present invention.

A preferred communications network with which the present invention may be utilized is the Internet. The Internet is a worldwide decentralized network of
10 computers having the ability to communicate with each other. The Internet has gained broad recognition as a viable medium for communicating and for conducting business. The World-Wide Web (Web) is comprised of server-hosting computers (Web servers) connected to the Internet that have hypertext documents (referred to as Web pages) stored therewithin. Web pages are accessible by client
15 programs (e.g., Web browsers) utilizing the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) via a Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) connection between a client-hosting device and a server-hosting device, and/or between wireless client/devices and Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) server devices. While HTTP and Web pages are the prevalent forms for the Web, the Web itself
20 refers to a wide range of protocols including Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTPS), File Transfer Protocol (FTP), and Gopher, and Web content formats including plain text, HyperText Markup Language (HTML), Extensible Markup Language (XML), Wireless Markup Language (WML), as well as image formats such as Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) and Joint Photographic Experts Group
25 (JPEG).

A Web site is conventionally a related collection of Web files that includes a beginning file called a "home" page. From the home page, a visitor can access other files and applications at a Web site. A large Web site may utilize a number of servers, which may or may not be different and which may or may not be
30 geographically-dispersed. For example, the Web site of the International Business Machines Corporation (ibm.com) consists of thousands of Web pages and files spread out over multiple Web servers in locations world-wide.

A Web server (also referred to as an HTTP server) is a computer program that utilizes HTTP to serve files that form Web pages to requesting Web clients. Exemplary Web servers include International Business Machines Corporation's family of Lotus Domino® servers, the Apache server (available from apache.org),
5 and Microsoft's Internet Information Server (IIS), available from Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, Washington. A Web client is a requesting program that also utilizes HTTP. A browser is an exemplary Web client for use in requesting Web pages and files from Web servers. A Web server waits for a Web client, such as a browser, to open a connection and to request a specific Web page or
10 application. The Web server then sends a copy of the requested item to the Web client, closes the connection with the Web client, and waits for the next connection.

HTTP allows a browser to request a specific item, which a Web server then returns and the browser renders within a display screen. To ensure that browsers
15 and Web servers can interoperate unambiguously, HTTP defines the exact format of requests (HTTP requests) sent from a browser to a Web server as well as the format of responses (HTTP responses) that a Web server returns to a browser. Exemplary browsers that can be utilized by users accessing a Web site according to the present invention include, but are not limited to, Netscape Navigator®
20 (America Online, Inc., Dulles, VA) and Internet Explorer™ (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA). Browsers typically provide a graphical user interface for retrieving and viewing Web pages, applications, and other resources served by Web servers.

As is known to those skilled in this art, a Web page is conventionally
25 formatted via a standard page description language such as HTML, which typically contains text and can reference graphics, sound, animation, and video data. HTML provides for basic document formatting and allows a Web content provider to specify anchors or hypertext links (typically manifested as highlighted text) to other servers. When a user selects (*i.e.*, activates) a particular hypertext link, a
30 browser running on the user's client device reads and interprets an address, called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) associated with the hypertext link, connects the browser with a Web server at that address, and makes a request (*e.g.*, an HTTP request) for the file identified in the hypertext link. The Web server then sends the

requested file to the client device, which the browser interprets and renders within a display screen.

As will be appreciated by those of skill in the art, the present invention may be embodied as methods, data processing systems, or computer program products.

- 5 Accordingly, the present invention may take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment or an embodiment combining software and hardware aspects. Furthermore, the present invention may take the form of a computer program product on a computer-usable storage medium having computer-usable program code means embodied in the medium. Any suitable
10 computer readable medium may be utilized including hard disks, CD-ROMs, optical storage devices, or magnetic storage devices.

- Computer program code for carrying out operations of the present invention may be written in an object oriented programming language such as Java®, Smalltalk or C++. However, the computer program code for carrying out
15 operations of the present invention may also be written in conventional procedural programming languages, such as the "C" programming language, or in a functional (or fourth generation) programming language such as Lisp, SML, or Forth. The program code may execute entirely on the user's computer, partly on the user's computer, as a stand-alone software package, partly on the user's computer and
20 partly on a remote computer or entirely on the remote computer. In the latter scenario, the remote computer may be connected to the user's computer through a local area network (LAN) or a wide area network (WAN), or the connection may be made to an external computer (for example, through the Internet using an Internet Service Provider).

- 25 The present invention is described below with reference to flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams of methods, apparatus (systems) and computer program products according to an embodiment of the invention. It will be understood that each block of the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams, and combinations of blocks in the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams,
30 can be implemented by computer program instructions. These computer program instructions may be provided to a processor of a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a machine, such that the instructions, which execute via the processor of the

computer or other programmable data processing apparatus, create means for implementing the functions specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

5 These computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer-readable memory that can direct a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer-readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instruction means which implement the function specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

10 The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer implemented process such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing
15 the functions specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

 Referring now to **Figure 3**, a system suitable for use with various embodiments of the present invention is illustrated. As seen in **Figure 3**, a web client data processing system **220** may communicate over a network **222** with a server, such as the e-commerce server **224** illustrated in **Figure 3**. The e-commerce server **224** may provide Web pages, applets or other such programs to
20 the web client **220** over network **222**. The network **222** may be the Internet or an intranet or a combination of the two and may include various types of communications including communications over telephone lines, wireless communications, local area network (LAN) or wide area network (WAN)
25 communications or the like.

 In operation, the e-commerce server **224** provides a Web page containing images adapted to instruct and solicit information and instructions from a customer. The web client **220** displays the Web pages and a user selects options and provided information through selective manipulation of buttons and the like
30 and entry of data into selected fields.

 The e-commerce server **224** may provide to a web client **220** browser interpretable pages such as HTML pages, dynamic HTML (DHTML) pages or Extensible Markup Language (XML) pages which may display information for on-

line transactions. As will be appreciated by those of skill in the art, the web client 220 may be any user workstation or device capable of rendering the browser interpretable pages such as, for example, a personal computer or a network computer or even pervasive computing devices such as a personal data assistant (PDA) or a smartphone. Furthermore, the term browser is used herein to refer to any application, program, hardware or other device that may interpret and display a browser interpretable page such as an HTML or XML page. Accordingly, the present invention should not be construed as limited to any particular workstation or browser implementation. Furthermore, the present invention may be applicable to a number of different architectures and, thus, should not be construed as limited to the particular configuration illustrated in **Figure 3**, but may be utilized with any configuration suitable for carrying out the operations described herein.

Referring now to **Figure 4**, an exemplary embodiment of a data processing system 230 suitable for use as a web client 220 and/or an e-commerce server 224 in accordance with embodiments of the present invention is illustrated and may include input device(s) 232 such as a keyboard or keypad, a display 234, and a memory 236 that communicate with a processor 238. The data processing system 230 may further include a storage system 242, a speaker 244 and an I/O data port(s) 246 that also communicate with the processor 238. The storage system 242 may include removable and/or fixed media such as floppy disks, ZIP drives, hard disks or the like as well as virtual storage such as a RAMDISK. The I/O data port 246 can be used to transfer information between the data processing system 230 and another computer system or a network (*e.g.*, the Internet). Such data processing systems may include, for example, personal computers, laptop computers, mainframe computers, pervasive computing devices such as personal digital assistants, smartphones or the like, or even embedded processing systems. The components of a particular data processing system may be conventional or custom components, such as those used in many conventional computing devices, which may be configured to operate as described herein.

Figure 5 is a block diagram of data processing systems that illustrate systems, methods, and computer program products in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. The processor 238 communicates with the memory 236 via an address/data bus 248. The processor 238 can be a

commercially available or custom microprocessor. The memory 236 is representative of the overall hierarchy of memory devices containing the software and data used to implement the functionality of the data processing system 230.

The memory 236 can include, but is not limited to, the following types of devices:
5 cache, ROM, PROM, EPROM, EEPROM, flash memory, SRAM, and DRAM.

As shown in **Figure 5**, the memory 236 may contain several categories of software and data used in the data processing system 230: the operating system 252; the application program(s) 260; the input/output (I/O) device drivers 258; and the data 256. As will be appreciated by those of skill in the art, the operating
10 system 252 may be any operating system suitable for use with a data processing system, such as OS/2, AIX or OS/390 from International Business Machines Corporation, Armonk, NY, WindowsCE, WindowsNT, Windows95, Windows98 or Windows2000 from Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA, PalmOS from Palm, Inc., MacOS from Apple Computer, UNIX or Linux, proprietary operating
15 systems or dedicated operating systems, for example, for embedded data processing systems.

The I/O device drivers 258 typically include software routines accessed through the operating system 252 by the application program 260 to communicate with devices such as the input devices 232, the display 234, the speaker 244, the
20 storage system 242, the I/O data port(s) 246, and certain memory 236 components. The application program(s) 260 is illustrative of the programs that implement the various features of the data processing system 230. Finally, the data 256 represents the static and dynamic data used by the application program(s) 260, operating system 252, I/O device drivers 258, and other software programs that may reside in
25 the memory 236.

As is further seen in **Figure 5**, the application program(s) 260 may include a web browser 262. The web browser 262 may be any conventional web browser capable of being configured to carry out the operations described herein. The present invention should not be construed as limited to the configuration of **Figure**
30 **5** but may encompass any suitable architecture, programming language or division of function which may carry out the operations described herein for ordering a listing in a business directory. While the present invention is illustrated, for example, with reference to a web browser 262, as will be appreciated by those of

skill in the art, the functions carried out by these modules may also be incorporated into for example, the operating system 252. Thus, the present invention should not be construed as limited to the configuration of **Figure 5** but is intended to encompass any configuration capable of carrying out the operations described herein.

Figures 6A and **6B** are a flow charts illustrating the methods, systems, and computer program products according to certain embodiments of the present invention. It will be understood that each step of each flow chart, and combinations of the steps in the flow chart diagram, can be implemented by computer program instructions. These computer program instructions may be loaded onto a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a machine such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus create means for implementing the functions specified in the flow chart step(s). These computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer readable memory that can direct a computer or other programmable apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instruction means which implement the functions specified in the flow chart step(s). The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or other programmable apparatus to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer implemented process such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing the functions specified in the flow chart step(s).

Accordingly, steps of the flow chart illustrations support combinations of means for performing the specified functions, combinations of steps for performing the specified functions and program instruction means for performing the specified function. It will also be understood that each step of the flow chart illustrations, and combinations of steps in the flow chart illustrations, can be implemented by special purpose hardware based computer systems which perform the specified functions or steps, or combinations of special purpose hardware and computer instructions.

Referring now to **Figure 6A**, a flow chart illustrating operations of the present invention for receiving an order for a listing of a business in a business directory will now be described. The questions include providing a Web site that is accessible by the customer (Block 300). The system then receives a request
5 from the customer at the Web site to place the order for the listing of the business in the business directory (Block 301).

Referring now to **Figure 6B**, a flowchart illustrating operations of the present invention for receiving an order for a business directory listing in accordance with more particular embodiments of the present invention will now be
10 described. Processing begins with the generation of a home page or introduction Web page 410 as shown in **Figure 7** (Block 302). The introduction Web page 410 may be accessed by the customer by entering a corresponding Web address (*e.g.*, URL) in the browser of the web client and directing the browser to the address. Alternatively, the customer may access the introduction Web page 410 by
15 actuating a link on an associated Web page that transfers the customer to the Web page 410.

The introduction Web page 410 may include a graphical and textual description 412 of enhanced listings and an overview of the ordering process. According to some embodiments, the description 412 includes a graphical model
20 or representation 413 of the step-by-step process described hereinbelow. The description 412 may include advertising copy and instructions to proceed by clicking a button 414. The customer initiates the ordering procedure by clicking the button 414, which command is received by the system (Block 303).

Responsive to actuation of the button 414, a basic listing Web page 420 (**Figure 8**) is generated (Block 304). The Web page 420 includes instructions 422 directing the customer to enter appropriate data in data entry fields 424 of the Web page 420. As illustrated, the information to be entered by the customer includes the name of the business, the business address, the business telephone number, the business e-mail address, and the name of a contact person for the listing. The
30 customer may abort the order process by clicking or pressing a button 428. Alternatively, once the required information has been entered in the fields of the Web page 420, the user can continue to the next step by pressing the button 426 to send the information to the system (Block 306).

Responsive to the customer's pressing of the button **426**, a market and category solicitation Web page **430** (**Figure 9**) is generated (Block **310**). The Web page **430** includes instructions **432** to select the appropriate region or market (*e.g.*, the geographical market) for the customer's business from pull down menus **434**.

5 The available regions or markets are typically defined by the directory publisher. The Web page **430** further includes instructions **436** instructing the customer to select the category or categories within which the customer wishes to have the customer's business listed in the classifications or groupings of the business directory. According to some embodiments and as illustrated, the category

10 selection process is a tiered process. The listing will appear in each of the categories and subcategories selected. The customer first selects a subject area from one of several available subject areas or headings using the pull down menu **438A**. Related general categories are then made available for selection using the pull down menu **438B**. Once a general category has been selected by the

15 customer, further subcategories are enabled for selection using the pull down menu **438C**. Once a desired category or subcategory has been selected, the user clicks the button **442** to add the category to the listing order. The user may continue this process until all desired categories have been selected. If necessary, the customer can remove a category using the associated button **444**. After the customer has

20 completed selection of the desired categories, the user clicks the button **446** to continue and submit the business market information and business category information to the system (Block **312**).

With reference to **Figures 10A-10B**, responsive to the customer's clicking of the button **446**, an options solicitation Web page **450** is generated (Block **314**).

25 The Web page **450** may be a single extended Web page **450** as shown (**Figures 10A, 10B and 10C** show various sequential portions of a common Web page **450**), or may be broken into multiple Web pages. The options solicitation Web page **450** includes instructions **452** to the customer. The customer may select the desired options by clicking and thereby checking the associated boxes **454A, 456A, 460A, 462A, 464A**. The customer can obtain a further description of each option by

30 clicking a respective associated link **454B, 456B, 460B, 464B**.

By clicking the box **454A**, the customer selects the Web link option, which corresponds to the Web site link button **122** (and the associated functionality) of

the listing **102 (Figure 1)**. The customer must enter the desired Web site address in the data entry field **454C**.

By clicking the box **456A**, the customer selects the e-mail link option, which corresponds to the e-mail link button **124** (and the associated functionality) of the listing **102**. The customer must enter the desired e-mail address in the data entry field **456C**.

By clicking the box **460A**, the customer selects the enhanced text option, which corresponds to the enhanced text **120** of the listing **102**. The customer must enter the desired text in the data entry field **460C**.

By clicking the box **462A**, the customer selects the highlighted listing option, which corresponds to the highlighting **128** of the listing **102**.

By clicking the box **462A**, the customer selects the info plus option, which corresponds to the "more info" button **122** and the info plus Web page **130 (Figure 2)**. When this option is selected, the customer may provide various supplemental information for inclusion in the info plus Web page **130**, as outlined in the remainder of the options Web page **450**. For example, the customer may include a text message in the listing by entering text in the data entry field **464C**. The customer may provide a Web site address and an e-mail address by entering the same in the data entry fields **464D** and **464E**, respectively. The customer may advertise its year of business establishment by entering the appropriate year in the data entry field **464F**. The customer may indicate the business's hours of operation by entering the same in the data entry fields and boxes **464G**. The customer may provide additional telephone numbers on the info plus Web page **130** by entering the same in the data entry fields **464H**. The customer may indicate various additional information on the info plus Web page **130** by entering the information in the data entry fields **464I** (for a listing of brands serviced, offered or the like), **464J** (for amenities offered), and **464K** (for associations to which the business belongs). The customer may further set forth on the info plus Web page **130** a listing of payment types accepted by checking the appropriate boxes **464L**.

If desired, the customer may obtain a provisional price quote for the options and categories thus far selected by clicking the button **465**. The customer may abort the order in process by clicking the button **468**. If the customer is satisfied

with the order thus far, the customer can click the button **466** to send the options selections and related data or enhancement information to the system (Block **316**).

Responsive to the customer's clicking of the button **466**, a billing information solicitation Web page **470** (**Figure 11**) is generated (Block **320**). The
5 billing solicitation Web page **470** includes instructions **472** directing the customer to enter billing data in data entry fields **474**. The customer may abort the order process by clicking the button **478**. Alternatively, the customer may proceed with the process by clicking the button **476**, whereupon the billing information entered in the data entry fields **474** is submitted to the system (Block **322**).

10 Responsive to the user's clicking the button **476**, the system calculates a price quote for the categories and options selected (Block **324**). The system then generates an order summary Web page **480** (**Figure 12**) (Block **326**). The order summary Web page **480** includes instructions **482** to the customer directing the customer to review his or her order. The Web page **480** further includes a listing
15 **484** of all of the basic listing data, market selection, selected categories, and selected options. The Web page **480** also includes an itemized listing **486A** of the costs associated with each of the selected categories and options, as well as a total cost **486B**. Links **485** are provided on the Web page **480** to allow the customer to return to the appropriate Web page **410**, **420**, **430**, **450**, **470** to modify the data
20 previously entered or selections previously made. The customer may abort the order by clicking the button **488**. Alternatively, the customer may submit his or her acceptance of the order to the system by clicking the button **487** (Block **330**).

Responsive to the customer's clicking the button **487**, a terms and conditions Web page **490** (**Figure 13**) is generated (Block **332**). The Web page
25 **490** includes instructions **492** to the user to read the conditions under which the listing is offered, as well as a window **494** (which may be scrollable, as illustrated) including a listing of the terms and conditions. A link **495** may be provided to allow the customer to download a printer friendly (e.g., .pdf) electronic copy of the terms and conditions shown in the window **494**. The user may abort the order by
30 clicking the button **498**. Alternatively, the user may click the button **496** to submit his or her agreement to the terms and conditions to the system (Block **334**).

Responsive to the user's clicking the button **496**, an order confirmation Web page **500** (**Figure 14**) is generated (Block **336**). The Web page **500** includes

an indication to the customer that the order has been confirmed, as well as any related information. According to some embodiments, a copy of the confirmation will be mailed to the customer's e-mail address, as previously entered by the customer. The Web page 500 further includes a listing 504 of the information
5 previously provided on the summary Web page 480. Again, a link 506 is provided to allow the customer to download a printer friendly electronic copy of the order confirmation. The customer may return to the introduction Web page 410 by clicking a button 508 in order to begin the order process for a further listing in the business directory.

10 The information collected from the customer during the ordering process (e.g., the basic listing data, the market and category selections, and the options data and selections) may thereafter be compiled and automatically, semi-automatically, or manually formatted to form the listing 102. According to some embodiments, the information is provided to a directory associate who manually formats and
15 edits the data and selections as appropriate to configure a draft listing or "proof", and thereafter submits the draft listing for inclusion in the business directory. Optionally, the draft listing may be forwarded to the customer for review prior to publication in the business directory.

As will be appreciated from the foregoing description, the customer need
20 not select and include all of the available options. Additional options may be made available. Certain basic features may be provided instead as optional enhancements (e.g., the map link) or vice-versa.

The foregoing is illustrative of the present invention and is not to be construed as limiting thereof. Although a few exemplary embodiments of this
25 invention have been described, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible in the exemplary embodiments without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of this invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that the foregoing is illustrative of the
30 present invention and is not to be construed as limited to the specific embodiments disclosed, and that modifications to the disclosed embodiments, as well as other embodiments, are intended to be included within the scope of the invention.